

## Cannes Games

HONG KONG DIRECTOR Wong Kar-Wai (*Chungking Express*) attributes much of his unique style—mixed-up time, revved-up action, campy excess—to late gay Argentine novelist Manuel Puig (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*). So it's no surprise Wong's new *Happy Together* (pictured below), which premiered in competition at May's Cannes Film Festival, is a gay love story that begins with handsome Tony Leung Chiu-Wai skewering Chinese matinee idol Leslie Cheung (*Farewell, My Concubine*). Says Wong, "*Happy Together* is the story of a reunion: for two Chinese lovers [who meet again in Buenos Aires], as well as for all three Chinas."



Traditionally a very hetero affair, this year's 50th Cannes fest also uncovered these other gay-tinged features:

- **Bent.** Martin Sherman's classic play of gay men in a Nazi concentration camp finally reaches the screen, courtesy of British TV and stage director Sean Mathias.
- **East Palace, West Palace.** An artifice-laden tale (formerly *Behind the Forbidden City*) by Beijing-based Zhang Yuan about a park cruiser who falls for the cop who repeatedly busts him.
- **Love and Death on Long Island.** In Richard Kwietniowski's film, John Hurt plays an aging widower who becomes enamored with a young actor (Jason Priestley) and tracks him—and his girlfriend—down.
- **Ma Vie en Rose.** Alain Berliner's dramedy about the littlest transsexual: a boy who announces he's really a girl and expects a miracle to provide the body to match.
- **Hamam, The Turkish Bath.** A married Italian (Alessandro Gassman) makes an unexpected partner choice in a Turkish steam room in Ferzan Ozpetek's film.
- **Welcome to Woop Woop.** Gay Aussie Stephan Elliott (*Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*) tells a breeder's tale: Johnathon Schaech (*The Doom Generation*) finds himself held prisoner as intended sperm donor to a gene-deprived Australian mining community.

—HOWARD FEINSTEIN

be your undoing; *The English Patient*: War is hell because it interferes with adultery. 5) *Scream* director Wes Craven makes fun of his own past films; *Patient's* Anthony Minghella makes fun of David Lean's. 6) Take one look at Ralph Fiennes. At least *Scream*'s David Arquette *knows* his mustache looks stupid. (Dimension) —BRUCE C. STEELE

## When Night Is Falling

directed by Patricia Rozema

THE WHIMSICAL SURREALISM of Canadian director Patricia Rozema's 1987 lesbian masterpiece *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* has evolved into stately craftsmanship for this simple, poignant love story. On the day of her dog's untimely death, Camille (Pascale Bussières), who teaches at a Christian college, meets stunning circus performer Petra (Rachael Crawford); after a hang glider ride and some stylized lesbian sex (elegantly intercut with a two-sister trapeze act), Camille does an Anne Heche, taking to the gay life with a convert's zeal. The "issues" here—Christianity vs. benev-

olent hedonism; loyalty vs. passion—are lost amid the gorgeous photography (somewhat diminished on video) and the two women's mutual attraction. Maybe that's the point: Nothing else really matters. (Evergreen) —B.C.S.

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## Porn Again: Life After Skin Flicks

Can a former triple-X actor build an A-list career without hiding his past? ERIC GUTIERREZ reports.

**T**HE ER IS SWAMPED, and the handsome 44-year-old resident physician has been on call for more than 10 hours. A quick scrub, a swig of coffee, and he's back in action, checking vitals, meds, and symptoms of a man on a gurney, ravaged by a variety of AIDS-related illnesses. What he doesn't notice is that the patient is also examining him, checking out his well-built body and

steely blue eyes. The patient can't take his eyes off the doctor.

"Then he called me by my porn name," says the doctor, the former Mark West, star of *Blow Me Down* and *Sex Star Interactive*. "For the first few seconds, it was uncomfortable, then just plain comical. We were both laughing. He wanted to ask me questions about the movies, but it was extremely busy with nurses coming and going."

From our doctors to our MTV jockeys, former stars of gay male pornography are cropping up everywhere, and many of them don't care who knows it—or at least, like Dr. West, have no trouble moving ahead in new careers even if their past peeks through now and again. Now that American society routinely forgives

*Eric Gutierrez has written for the Los Angeles Times and Si magazine.*

MAURICE VELLERDOP